

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update (OSRP)

9/20/21 Meeting Minutes

Virtual Meeting called to order: 5:35pm

adjourned: 7:04pm

Committee Member Participants:

Brian Goldberg, Heidi Ricci, Gaynor Bigelbach

Non-Committee Member Participants:

Lori Slade, Meredith Marcinkewicz, Sherry Anders, Jay Duffner, Michelle Scaley

Key Discussion Points

1. **Non-Committee Members of the public were welcomed and asked to speak why each was joining this meeting:**
 - a. Sherry Anders noted she's keen to help implement aspects of the plan as Chair of Shirley Greenway Committee.
 - b. Lori Slade noted she hikes throughout town, organizes lots of hikes and has a lot of computer experience, so she might be helpful advancing some survey efforts and engaging seniors.
 - c. Meredith Marcinkewicz noted she's lived in Shirley for 50 yrs, was a part of first Earth Day celebration and has a strong interest in historic preservation.
 - d. Jay Duffner noted he's lived in town for 15 yrs; sits on the Shirley Rec Commission and is a Cub Scout leader
2. **Stakeholder Mapping:** All participants were asked to inform a mapping of key stakeholders and groups who should be consulted as part of this plan update process. The extensive list of input was recorded and documented for future engagement planning (see appendix A).
3. **Processes for Public Engagement:** All brainstormed some methods for seeking community input about priorities and needs to be addressed in the plan update. Topics included:
 - a. *Public school engagement* - including students, teachers and parents. Ideas included engaging students in outdoor discovery activities, integrating outdoor classroom activities with science curricula and partnering with the PTA for outdoor programs that engage students and their families
 - b. *Survey Methods* - Use of online and paper surveys integrated with any outdoor programs; survey invitations via Town communication channels, mail, Shirley Greenway Newsletter, School communications, etc.
4. **Key Opportunities for Increasing Public Engagement**
 - a. *Leverage Engagement from those Feeling Loss of Holdenwood Access* – Community input conversations from Shirleyfest (Sept 2021) revealed a lot of residents are frustrated by the closure of Holdenwood trails and are seeking new natural areas to discover. Folks liked the well-marked trails, parking access, open landscapes and natural beauty of Holdenwood.
 - b. *Awareness and Accessibility* - Many noted that residents are seeking to access more conservation areas, yet don't have much knowledge about locations, trails, unique attractions, etc. Questions and ideas from the public that could generate

more interest in this plan update include: creation/enhancement of online maps featuring Shirley Trails (i.e. www.grotontrails.org), signage at trailheads and well-marked parking areas can create much greater awareness, accessibility and appreciation of Shirley's natural and recreational offerings.

- c. *Service Projects* – Many noted that groups in town such as scouts, schools, community service commitments, etc. are seeking specific service project opportunities. This creates opportunities for articulating service project needs for town conservation areas so that matches can be made with those seeking to participate in service projects.
- d. *Celebrating Historic Shirley Landscapes* – History can come alive throughout Shirley's conservation areas (i.e. celebrating conservation "trail blazers" such as former Shirley-resident Benton Mackaye (founder of Appalachian Trail)

Decisions

- 1. Committee voted unanimously to appoint Brian as Chair with nomination by Gaynor and second by Heidi.
- 2. Committee agreed to define and identify specific roles for other members that c in future meetings
- 3. Committee agreed to review and approve minutes at next meeting.

Next Steps

- 1. Brian to circulate summary of public engagement ideas
- 2. Next meeting will discuss the steps for engaging the public and seeking input

Attachment A: Draft Brainstorm of People/Stakeholders to Engage for Input and Assistance Updating this Conservation Action Plan (not exhaustive list, not in any particular order)

Point of Contact	Representative Group
<i>Potential</i> Elected / Appointed Representatives / Liaisons to the Open Space + Rec Committee	
Jay Duffner	Recreation Commission; Cub Scouts; Shirley Youth Soccer
Brian Hildebrandt ?	Board of Finance
Deb Flagg ?	Select Board
Sarah Widing ?	Planning Board
Jennifer McGuinness (to help with maps and potential liaison)	Conservation Commission
Sherry Anders	Greenway Committee
Meredith Marcinkewicz	Historic Preservation

Shirley Historical Society Curator	
Janet Tice	Historic interests + Planning Board
TBD	Council on Aging
TBD	Master Plan Implementation Committee
Jay Duffner	Rec Commission - programs for the fields
TBD	Fields Committee - governance over the fields
TBD	Sports clubs--youth baseball and football
Sherry Anders and Lori Slade can help connect this group to service projects	Girl Scouts with troops and age groups
TBD	Shirley cub scout pack K-5th
Jay Duffner can get a hold of any Ayer scout folks	There are older scouts who work with Ayer since Shirley does not have its own facilities.
<u>Potential Town and State Staff/Town Office for Liaison Engagement to Open Space Plan</u>	
	DPW
Mike Fleming	Town Conservation Agent
Anne Gagnon	MA Div of Fisheries and Wildlife
	School System reps (teachers and students)
	Devens Enterprise
	Office of Town Administrator
<u>Community Representatives / Key Constituencies</u>	
	Hunting community (Rod + Gun club)
	Lura White PTA and/or Faculty
	Middle School PTA and/or Faculty
	High School PTA and/or Faculty
Sherry Anders? / Lori Slade?	Girl Scouts
	Farming/Ag Community
	Horseback Riders

	Mountain Bikers
	Hikers
	Dog owners
	Land Trusts + Regional Conservation Orgs
	Real Estate + Land Development
	Historic Preservationists
	Orgs that own protected land (USFWS, Trustees, State Div Fisheries and Wildlife, NRWA, Devens Enterprise Commission)
Other names TBD	Other groups TBD